

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

INFORMATION

September 10, 1970

ARMY, NSS, review
completed.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*SUBJECT: Cambodian Offensive to Relieve Enemy Pressure on
Kompong Thom

You may have noted press reports stating that the Cambodians have launched a significant operation to clear the road between Phnom Penh and the provincial capital of Kompong Thom, which is some 80 kilometers north of Phnom Penh. The operation is also intended to relieve enemy pressure on the city.

We have received a message from our political-military counselor in Phnom Penh, Mr. Ladd, which provides more details of the Cambodian operation. Although Mr. Ladd describes it as "limited," it emerges as very sizeable by Cambodian standards, consisting of the total of 14 battalions organized in two infantry brigades plus a three-battalion commando force. Naval forces will also be involved, as will supporting artillery, motor transport, and air support. Significant aspects are:

- The operation will consist of a ground attack along Route 6 (this began September 7), in which the spearhead is a brigade made up of six infantry battalions which were evacuated from northeastern Cambodia and retrained and reequipped in South Vietnam. This force is now known as the "1st Shock Brigade." Another brigade of five infantry battalions will be attached.
- An amphibious force of commandos and naval units will advance on Kompong Thom up the Tonle Sap Lake and the river system leading to Kompong Thom. It begins September 9, and will rely both on Cambodian naval vessels and civilian shipping.
- The Cambodians hope that the ground assault will draw off most of the enemy strength and leave the way clear for the amphibious

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forces. Mr. Ladd helicoptered over this general area on September 2 and found the region almost entirely under water, thus making access comparatively easy.

- Mr. Ladd believes that the Cambodians have done a good job in planning and organization. Forces are adequate, and air support will be provided by Cambodian T-28s and C-47s. Additional allied air support will probably be needed, though.
- Earlier communication difficulties in the Cambodian armed forces have now apparently been overcome. Mr. Ladd reports that communications have been established from FANK Headquarters to the three major command posts and from each of these to their own subordinate units and to the air and naval direction centers.

Comment: If this operation succeeds, as Mr. Ladd believes it has a good chance of doing, it should have a very good effect on Cambodian morale. Similarly, the morale of the Communist forces might suffer at least some decline as a result of the increased Cambodian capabilities. We will watch progress carefully and be especially interested in the performance of the "Shock Brigade" forces retrained in South Vietnam.

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[TS-HK-D3116]

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ACTION
September 8, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

**SUBJECT: Cambodian Offensive to Relieve Enemy Pressure on
Kompong Thom**

At General Haig's request, I have prepared a brief memorandum from you to the President covering the appraisal of the Cambodian operation against Kompong Thom submitted by Fred Ladd (Tab B).

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum to the President at Tab A.

Attachment

JHH/NKL/sfp/9-8-70

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